



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**OPERATION "ORLANDO CORRAL" NETS SIXTEEN IN PASSPORT FRAUD**

U. S. Attorney Paul I. Perez announced today that 16 individuals have been charged in Operation "Orlando Corral" which was aimed at stopping passport fraud. The charges in the 16 complaints that been filed range from passport fraud, making a false statement to a government agency, and false impersonation of a United States citizen. If convicted, they face a maximum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment for passport fraud, 5 years' imprisonment for making a false statement to a government agency, and 3 years' imprisonment for false impersonation of a United States citizen. To date, 13 of the 16 individuals have had their first appearance in Orlando federal court.

During the investigative phase of Operation "Orlando Corral," a number of passport applications were reviewed by federal agents. When irregularities and possible fraud were found, those persons were invited by letter to pick-up their passport by appointment. After arriving for their appointment, they were asked a number of questions and then arrested if it was believed fraud had been committed to

obtain the passport. Those arrests took place on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of last week in Orlando, Florida.

U.S. Attorney Paul I. Perez stated, “A U.S. passport is one of the most precious documents that anyone can possess. It allows the holder to travel freely throughout this nation and the world. We must protect the integrity of all passports by maintaining vigilant scrutiny during the application process.”

This case was investigated by the U.S. State Department Diplomatic Service, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the Social Security Administration, Orange County Sheriff’s Office, Orlando Police Department, Osceola County Sheriff’s Office, and the Florida Highway Patrol. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Roger B. Handberg.

A complaint or indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent until, and unless, proven guilty.